

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION SERVICE
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(The following statement was telephoned to the Washington Office of the Forest Service by the Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wis., on December 11, 1946.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON CHRISTMAS TREES

QUESTION: Stop me if this question is out of order here, but what can I do to reduce the chances of the family Christmas tree catching fire?

ANSWER: That question is never out of order at this time of year. The answer is very simple: Buy your trees in as fresh a condition as possible; cut off the trunk at least an inch above the original cut end preferably diagonally--(this will open up more wood surface to absorb water). Place the tree in a container of water. Keep plenty of water in that container as long as the tree is in the house.

QUESTION: Don't you put anything in the water?

ANSWER: No. Just plain water is all you need. Of course all possible additional precautions against fire should be taken around the tree, too.

QUESTION: I thought there were some chemicals that could be added to the water to make the Christmas tree more fire-resistant.

ANSWER: Some of the best-known fire-retardant chemicals have been tried out for this purpose by the Forest Products Laboratory out at Madison, Wis., and by other testing laboratories. Not all of the different species of Christmas trees have been tested, nor all of the possible chemicals. Still the best authorities are satisfied that water in the wood, twigs, and needles of the tree is the best fire retardant.

QUESTION: Then the chemicals don't help?

ANSWER: No, apparently not. As a matter of fact, many fire-retardant chemicals cause the needles to turn brown and drop off prematurely, even increasing the fire hazard in some cases.

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